



Advancing Colorado's Highly Skilled Workforce

H-1B

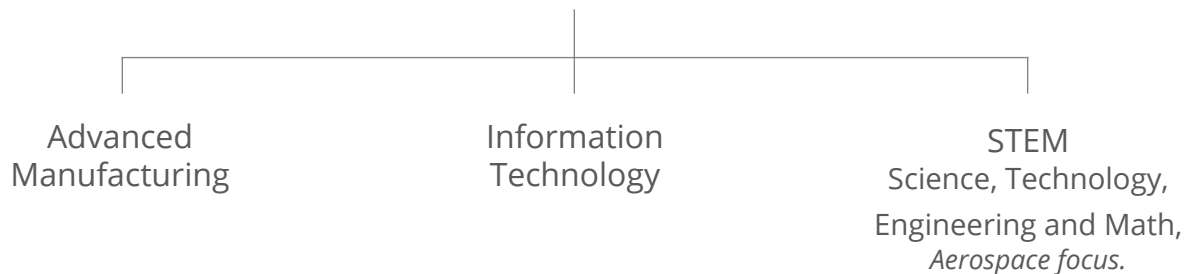
Technical Skills Training Grant
2nd Quarter 2014 Update



COLORADO
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

COLORADO IS GROWING SOME OF ITS KEY INDUSTRIES BY PROVIDING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE TO INTERMEDIATE, HIGHLY-SKILLED INCUMBENT WORKERS AND LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED WORKERS. TRAINING IS ENABLED THROUGH A \$5,000,000 GRANT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND IS FOCUSED ON OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES WHERE H-1B VISAS ARE USED TO HIRE FOREIGN WORKERS.

Occupations in these Industries



Grant Benefits

The grant provides funding for **up to 100% of the tuition costs** for eligible training. Participating businesses must match grant funds by providing paid time for employees to participate in the training.

- Training providers can be selected by the employer.
- Education and training can be “For-Credit” or “Non-Credit”, but all participants must receive a degree, credential or certificate at the conclusion.
- Training and education for incumbent workers will provide a clear pathway for individuals to retain their position, advance into a new position, or receive a raise.

H-1B grant funds can be leveraged with the Colorado First and Existing Industry grant program as well as other grants.

Who We've Helped

1,983 participants have been served through 06/30/14
1,564 completed education/job training activities and received credentials
2,734 industry recognized certificates and credentials awarded

Participating Workforce Centers

- Arapahoe/Douglas Works!
- Workforce Boulder County
- Denver Workforce Center
- Larimer County Workforce Center
- Mesa County Workforce Center
- Pikes Peak Workforce Center
- Pueblo Workforce Center
- Employment Services of Weld County

Key Partners

- Industry Advisory Council
- Colorado Workforce Development Council
- Other State Agencies
- Business & Industry Associations
- Partner Employers
- Education Partners
 - Colorado Community College System
 - University of Denver - Colorado Women's College

Success Stories

Connecting With Networks

Building connections and fostering partnerships, then sustaining them over time are important to the success of businesses. This approach applies equally to workforce centers and the connections that they build with organizations. The Larimer Workforce Center has established a productive relationship with the Northern Colorado Networking Group, more commonly known as NoCoNet. They are Northern Colorado's best known and most extensive job search network (free membership organization, though they encourage members to contribute in other ways).

The Larimer Workforce Center taps into this established network of educated and/or credentialed professionals to enroll long-term unemployed job seekers (LTUs) under the H-1B grant. A Larimer counselor attends NoCoNet on a monthly basis providing a presentation to the members about services available at Larimer Workforce, including the H-1B grant. The counselor will then meet one-on-one with interested NoCoNet members to review their work experience, skill set and employment interests, the H-1B's eligibility criteria, and the workforce center's application process. Through these monthly meetings, and the two jobs fairs NoCoNet holds each year, Larimer has identified and served both incumbent and the LTU, providing trainings with H-1B funding that helped individuals to upgrade their skill set and secure employment.

Larimer Workforce Center counselors have discovered that this personal approach to recruiting the long-term unemployed has been more effective than other approaches including web site marketing and e-mail blasts. These presentations and one-on-one conversations were in many cases the first time that the NoCoNet members had heard about the H-1B funding for skill upgrades for high skill workers. Their perception was that workforce centers only assisted and provided funding for low skill workers. Further, success breeds success as personal stories shared out by Larimer counselors of LTU high-skill individuals who have received H-1B funded training has sparked the interest of other long-term unemployed to take advantage of this opportunity.

Labor Underutilization

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics tracks six alternative measures of labor underutilization through a monthly survey, the Current Population Survey (CPS). One of the six measures, U-3, is familiar to us as it is based on the definition used for the official unemployment rate, and according to the CPS Colorado's unemployment rate is 6.0 percent (this rate may differ from the official state unemployment rate).

Two measures offer more narrow definitions of unemployment, while three other alternative measures more broadly define the unemployed to include discouraged, marginally-attached and part-time workers. These are many of the individuals who are no longer visible to the workforce centers as they are no longer seeking employment. The latter three more broadly defined measures more closely relate to the U.S. Department of Labor's Guidance for H-1B participation as a long-term unemployed individual. For example, the U-6 measure, those employed part time for economic reasons, stands at 4.0 percent for Colorado. Our rate is not nearly as high as Arizona or California, with rates of 6.6 and 6.5 respectively, but it does put a number to what is a hidden population. While, Colorado has only the 36th highest rate in the country, it is still higher than five of our seven neighboring states.

This information comes from the BLS "Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for States, Third Quarter of 2013 through Second Quarter of 2014 Averages," (<http://www.bls.gov/lau/stalt.htm>).

Talent Pipeline Legislation Signed

On May 21, Governor John Hickenlooper signed into law Senate Bill 14-205, creating a key industries talent pipeline working group through the Colorado Workforce Development Council. The Council will collaborate with the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Higher Education, Department of Education, and the Colorado Office of Economic Development to examine the needs of key industries and occupations and with that to develop and grow relevant talent pipelines. This act formalizes and reinforces much of the work that is currently being done through the Council in collaboration with the various state government departments with data collections, sector partnerships, and career pathways.

Get Involved

Contact Fred Franko
Fred.Franko@state.co.us
www.colorado.gov/cdle/h1b